



NORTH
DAKOTA

FNP News

Family
Nutrition
Program

#165

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Questions and answers about

Stretching Your Time and Dollars

Compare
unit prices
and
Nutrition
Facts labels
to get the
best nutrition
for your
dollar.

"I often buy convenience foods to save time, but they cost a lot. What are some tips to help me save time and money — and still serve nutritious meals?"

Sometimes convenience items are a good bargain, especially if you shop sales. For example, frozen 100% juice concentrate is a better buy than squeezing fresh fruit or buying cartons of juice. Spaghetti sauce in cans or jars, cake mixes, canned soups, fruits and vegetables can be good "buys" that also save you time.

On the other hand, packaged dinner mixes ("meat helpers"), seasoned rice mixes, coating mixes for potatoes or meat, and some frozen dinners aren't the best buy cost-wise or nutrition-wise. Packaged mixes often are higher in sodium.

"We're trying to eat more fruits and vegetables. What are some of the best fruit and vegetable bargains for the fall?"

Try comparing prices of different forms of fruits and vegetables, like canned, fresh and frozen all year long. Sometimes fresh produce is the best "deal" if it's "in season."

In the fall, these are some of the fruits and vegetables that are "in season": bananas, apples, pears, potatoes, carrots, cabbage, lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, sweet potatoes and squash.

"I have a hard time deciding what to cook for dinner. It's easier to eat at a restaurant, but that's hard on our budget! What can I do?"

Try planning a week's worth of menus ahead of time. For ideas, check the sale ads.

Planning takes time up front but will save you time and money in the long run.

Try these tips, too:

- Look for recipes that have few steps and few ingredients. Save your favorites in a folder or recipe box.
- When you're cooking, brown extra meat (like ground beef) and refrigerate (up to three days) or freeze (up to a month).
- When you're preparing chili, casseroles or soup, prepare a "double batch" and freeze the rest if you have freezer space. Tightly wrap and label with contents and date prepared. Keep an "inventory list" of what's in your freezer.

“I know that eating dairy foods can help keep my bones strong, but I get a stomachache when I have dairy foods. What can I do?”

You may have “lactose intolerance.” That’s when your body doesn’t produce enough of a chemical to break down lactose (the natural sugar found in milk). Most people with lactose intolerance still can have some dairy foods if they follow these tips:



- Try having a cup of milk with meals or snacks. Having milk with other food slows down digestion.
- Try yogurts with “live, active cultures.” These “friendly bacteria” break down lactose.
- Consider aged cheese, like cheddar, colby and Swiss.
- Slowly increase your dairy food intake. Drinking a little milk actually can help your body learn to digest dairy foods.
- For some people, flavored milk (like chocolate milk) is better tolerated.
- Try some other calcium sources, like calcium-fortified orange juice or cereal.



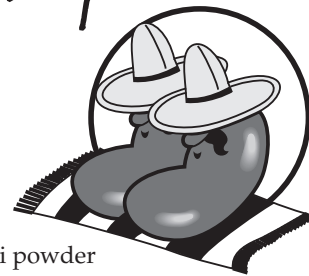
For more information about nutrition and food budgeting, contact the staff member at the Extension office noted on this newsletter. *The program is free.*

Check it out!



Chili Bean Dip

- 1 16-oz. can pinto beans (or use cooked dry edible beans)
- 2 Tbsp. chopped onion
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- ½ c. shredded cheese



Mash beans in a bowl. Add onion, chili powder and cheddar cheese. Serve warm or cold with raw vegetables, whole-wheat crackers and/or baked tortilla chips. Store leftovers in the refrigerator.

Makes 15 servings (2 Tbsp. each). Each serving has 45 calories and 1 gram fat.

Quesadilla

- ◆ 1 corn tortilla
- ◆ 2 Tbsp. shredded cheese
- ◆ 1 Tbsp. salsa

Place cheese and salsa on the tortilla and fold in half. Place tortilla in a pan on stove over medium heat. Cook on both sides until the cheese melts. (Optional: cook in microwave oven for 20 seconds or until cheese melts.)

Makes 1 serving. A serving has 130 calories and 6 grams fat.